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To the kindness of Professor F. W. Sanford, of the University of Nebraska, we owe knowledge of an interesting paper, by his colleague, Dr. Hartley B. Alexander, of the Department of Philosophy, which appeared in the Nebraska State Journal on September 17 last. The article was entitled Youth and the Classics.

Professor Alexander traces unwillingness to study the Classics to a single cause—the fact that “they lead to no vocation”.

Save only one! The pursuit of truth ought surely to be the first calling of all men. Our little individual callings—whether industrial or commercial or professional—all are made possible by what we call civilization; but civilization itself is made possible by the vocation of man as a civilized being, and that is the pursuit of truth.

Twenty years ago, says Professor Alexander, young men who were entering College turned away from the Classics because they wished to study subjects that had to do with the living truth; the Classics, they declared, opened no true road to wisdom. Vocational training had not yet been heard of.

If they turned from the knowledge of the ancients, it was because the glamorous affirmations of the great apostles of nineteenth century science seemed to them the gospel of truth. Nowadays, science for the sake of truth is going the way of the elder humanities, and we hear instead only of the “practical” (and that is to say, private) benefits of early and assiduous specialization to the narrow walks in life which each of us is expected to pursue—as if the world of men were some huge vaudeville upon whose petty stage each individual performs his local act in solitary inconsequence to what has gone before or follows after.

Science for the sake of truth has gone the way of the humanities for the sake of culture (which is but the more intimate truth of a sympathetic understanding of human nature); and in place of each of these, we are now to teach the youth of the land the vital importance of “number one”.

The same discussion, notes Professor Alexander, has been going on vigorously in France: see Dr. Ball's paper in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.61-63. One of the fruits of the strife is a passage by the late Henri Poincaré, which Professor Alexander quotes from *The Nation*:

“There might be a serious objection to classical studies”, wrote Poincaré. “If it is to be desired that nine out of ten Frenchmen become good mer-

chants and business men, is it not dangerous to disgust them beforehand with that which is to fill their lives? No doubt it would not be impossible to refute such an objection; but that is no business of mine. . . . I seek what must be done to form men of science. And here all is clear. The man of science ought not to tarry in the realization of practical aims; these, no doubt, he will obtain, but he must obtain them over and above. . . . Science has wonderful applications; but the science which would have in view only the applications would no longer be science—it would be only the kitchen. There is no science but disinterested science. . . . The spirit which should animate the man of science is that which breathed of old on Greece and brought there to birth poets and thinkers. There remains in our classical teaching I know not what of the old Greek soul; I know not what that makes us look ever upward. And that is more precious for the making of a man of science than the reading of many volumes of geometry”.

On this Professor Alexander comments as follows:

For those who see the question of the Classics from the angle of vocational training (it is seldom called “education”), Poincaré's argument is of little force, as a plea for the Classics. He, too, agrees that Latin and Greek lead to no profession. But for those who still believe in the importance of the pursuit of truth, for those who realize that modern science is great and helpful only because its first love is knowledge and not profit and who understand that even our material civilization—by-product, as it is, of our science—came into existence and can continue to exist only because men could value knowledge above gain—for all such Poincaré's words are a grave concern. For surely it would be a calamity to states and peoples were we to lose the talisman that points the way to truth.

With the Greeks it was a commonplace of life that our humanest appetite is love of knowledge. “All men by nature desire to know”, is the first sentence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. “By nature!” It is this trait, so universal in Hellenic nature, that Poincaré has in mind when he speaks of “the spirit breathed of old on Greece” as that “which should animate the man of science”; and, if we read between his lines, it is this which he expects the study of the Classics to keep alive through our passing generations.

Keener than ever in the past is the feeling that human attainments, whether scientific or political, can be justly understood and criticised only in the light of the history of our civilization as a whole. The history of science is almost a new subject, with such zeal is it now pursued. Work such as that of Schiaparelli and Tannery and Duhem and Dreyer in the history of physics and astronomy is giving us new perspectives on our own achievements and a

new understanding of why we value these sciences and of how they serve as indices of progress—and yet this work is very largely but an interpretation of the thought and achievement of the ancients. Science begins with the Greeks and in a very significant sense our science is still Greek science.

Professor Alexander then remarks that beneath the individual sciences, which are only the special forms in which truth presents itself, lies that more general culture which is the parent and fosterer of them all. To win that, in any real sense, we must study civilization, which is the study of human nature at its best, and the study of truth at its highest and purest value. For us of the western world the one civilization of most value is the civilization of the Mediterranean basin. From the peoples who dominated that basin "our medicine and our law, our engineering and our commerce, as well as our abstruse mathematics and philosophy and our humaner literature and art all derive in straight descent".

Nor should we suppose, in spite of the generations of students who have sought to interpret antiquity to us, that the material is nearing exhaustion. It is no more so than is the earth's crust under the hammering of geologists. There have been few periods in this study—certainly none in recent decades—more abundant in interest and result than is the present. The whole complexion of our origins and the whole color of our institutional life is being altered in the light of new illuminations from the newly discovered past. Books are appearing every year which record discoveries and advance interpretations that acquaint us in an ever more living fashion with the roots of our thinking and the foundations of our convictions,—everyday to us, but immemorial in their history.

In this living study are many themes worth mentioning—the broadening view of the relationship of east and west as our knowledge of ancient Asia grows, the new vistas of history which are being read into Greek myths from Homer onward in the light of the excavations in Crete and the isles; the revivification of Greek drama on the modern stage, German and French and English; the growing understanding of the economic and commercial ideals of the ancient states. But among these themes none, I think, is more significant to the culture of our own day than is the penetrating study that is now being devoted to the intellectual and emotional influences at work in the western world at the time of the beginning of Christianity.

For there are few of us, I imagine, who will not agree that it is to the events which made European civilization not a mere dependency of Asiatic culture, but an independent Christendom, that we owe what most we prize. And there is surely no more fascinating chapter, as there is surely no more crucial circumstance, in the story of the growth of humanity than that which deals with the birth of Christian sentiment and hope.

There are many books nowadays—books of searching scholarship and mature judgment—dealing with aspects of this theme. In English I call to mind Glover's *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, and Arnold's *Roman Stoicism*, as of conspicuous interest. But I would mention more particularly the new edition of a work by an American scholar, now in its second decade; for it surely

speaks well for the vitality of the interest in the Classics, as well as for the scholarly excellence of the work, that Henry Osborne Taylor's *Ancient Ideals* (The Macmillan Company) is called for in a second edition. There are two reasons why it should here receive an especial mention. The first is because of the comprehensiveness with which it treats the theme to which we have just alluded. For the author takes the whole range of ancient civilizations, Asiatic as well as European, into his account, giving us an inward and spiritual interpretation of the life whose outward dress we get in our political histories. Egypt and India and Persia as well as Greece and Rome and Israel fall into the scope of his large-modelled narrative, and for the life of each he seeks to give us a portrait which will show not what men were in their outward being so much as what, in their endeavors, sometimes blind and sometimes illumined, they aspired to be. And this aspirational meaning of human endeavor, shown most of all in literature and in art, is after all what most we value in human nature, and what least we are willing to lose from our heritage from the past.

I cannot here enter into a discussion of Taylor's treatment of his theme, for it is too big to be put aside with a word. But I would mention that he makes the advent of Christianity the key to his interpretation of the occidental mind, which theme he carries forward in his great companion study, *The Mediaeval Mind* (also Macmillan). But I would come to my second point. And this is that no reader of *Ancient Ideals* can fail to feel the value and distinction of that quality which comes from a first-hand acquaintance with the classical authors—the value of Greek and Latin in the curriculum.

Much, very much, can be gained in knowledge of ancient life from the books of interpretation which are being made for us—translations, commentaries, histories, intimate essays—but in the end there is always an intangible somewhat which can be gleaned only from the *ipsisima verba*, the very words, of sage and poet. Even a smattering of the classical tongues is helpful in this respect, while every gain in intimate understanding of the ancient languages is a widening of intellectual powers.

That such study is worth while not only for the individual student, for his own life's sake, but also for the state and nation—in order that the culture and spirit of the past may be kept alive, and in order that our own culture, whose life is, in so large a sense, still the life of the past, may be preserved—thoughtful men and men great in science as men great in letters and the arts proclaim to-day as valiantly as ever in the years gone by. And it may be that the time is not so far distant when our young men, as to-day the young men of France, will stand ready to demand that encouragement to a humanistic training which is their right and the right of posterity. Nor can it be doubted that when educators stand ready to recommend, the students will be eager to follow; and the study of Greek and Latin will no longer seem but the impractical preparation of the impractical. For in those days public education will be modelled for the good of the state, which will be seen to be also the good of the individual.

Utterances such as these, coming from those who are not primarily concerned with the Classics, who cannot be taunted with the charge that their own relation to the Classics is directly vocational, will

always find a warm welcome from *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*. We are glad to set Professor Alexander's paper in our special treasure-house of valued utterances from coadjutors in other fields—statements by large-minded and broad-visioned student who realize that their own work is sure to be barren, or at least to fall short of fullest fruition, unless they and their students both enjoy freely and fully the classical heritage. In this special treasure-store are e.g. the paper by Professor Sherman, on English and the Latin Question, in 5.201-203, 209-213, and Professor Cooper's paper, referred to in 6.73-74.

What Professor Alexander says of the claim of the Classics to recognition on the ground that they lead to the noblest of all vocations (and, one might add, avocations)—the search for truth for its own sake—reminds me of the earnest pleas made by Paulsen, in his *German Universities* (English translation), for the Faculty of Philosophy as the one Faculty of the University which exists for research and nothing else. In what Paulsen says lies, to my mind, the answer to most of the criticism made in this country of the current course for the Doctor's degree.

That Professor Alexander was setting up no mere man of straw when he declared that opposition to the Classics springs largely from the idea that they lead to no vocation may be shown, if necessary, by a reference to a book entitled *The American College*, by Abraham Flexner (The Century Company, 1908), 18-21: "Nothing tangible depends on Greek and Latin; they lead nowhere". Lead nowhere? we may, if we will, answer in terms of the 'practical', by reference to the book so well edited by Professor Kelsey, *Latin and Greek in American Education* (*THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.89-90, 97-98). The author of a book so frankly vocational as Mr. Flexner's could scarce understand an answer made in terms of those things of the spirit on which Professor Alexander so well insists. C. K.

A THEORY CONCERNING THE ORIGIN AND THE AFFILIATIONS OF THE CULT OF VESTA¹

Throughout Latin literature Vesta's cult is closely connected with the worship of homely divinities—Lares, Penates, Di Indigetes, Romulus—and the festival, the Vestalia, celebrated in her honor on the ninth of June was clearly a primitive ritual in which the goddess was viewed as the patroness of the home, not of its reverend hearth, but of its welcome and sustaining loaf. It was the feast of the bread-makers, when all the millstones were crowned with wreaths and the poor asses that turned them had a holiday, being, indeed, the very celebrants in the procession around the city. A

quaint sight the beasts must have been, decked with garlands and marching in triumphal pomp. Whatever penitential ceremonies there were fell to the lot of women, who formed another procession, pacing bare-footed to the temple of the goddess and to the altar of Jupiter Pistor, Jupiter the Bread-Maker! The miller, the bread-maker, the baker, and the asses—these were the favored on this gala day set apart to Vesta's glory.

The perpetual fire of the hearth, both of the home and of the city, the detail to us most familiar in this divinity's worship, speaks of more solemn things, the benefits and the sanctities of home life. It carries also suggestion of Greek rites, as of the Mother of the Gods, of Prometheus, and of Hephaestus, wherein the torch is conspicuous, symbol of man's illuminating by his courageous industry the blackness of ignorance—stealing fire from heaven and training clever artificers to work in fire for mankind—symbol also of mystic light in the midst of gloom.

The cult statue of Vesta, as we may judge from coins and medallions as well as from ancient notices, showed her draped in a long robe, wearing a veil on her head, and carrying in one hand a lamp, in the other a javelin. The latter is in some replicas replaced by the Palladium, while on a few medallions there is in both attributes departure from the ordinary type, the one being a drum, the other a Nike. We must believe that the lamp and the javelin are her original symbols, for which, as the cult developed, there might be substitutions. The former would suggest the fire of the hearth; the latter, which is preëminently a Roman and Volscian weapon, should afford an important clue to the origin of this form of religion at Rome.

The traditions which were current concerning the founding of the community of Vestals who served the goddess lead one to believe that the institution was of Italic, or primitive Roman, origin, later modified by Etruscan influence. Numa, it is said, first made the chosen number of Vestals four; Tarquinius Priscus increased the number to six. The literary legend of Aeneas saw in him the first founder of the community; more primitive is the story that the mother of Father Romulus was a Vestal. It is certainly at Alba Longa, the home of her father Numitor, that archaeologists derive the most trustworthy data regarding the earliest history of Rome. Curiously enough, her second name, often substituted for the more familiar Rhea, is Ilia, suggestive at least of Troy. In historic times all girls from six to ten years of age, whether of plebeian or patrician family, were eligible as Vestals, provided that they were without blemish. Their term of self-oblation was thirty years, ten of which were spent in learning the duties of their office, ten in performing them, ten in instructing others. Their care was the preservation of the fire on which the

¹This paper was read at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, at Baltimore, May 2, 1913.